

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 01001 271600Z

45

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 271235Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7900

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 1001

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR ET IS EG

SUBJ: REPORTED ISRAELI PRESENCE IN ETHIOPIA

REF: ADDIS 0967

1. EGYPTIANS HERE CONTINUE SHOW DEEP CONCERN OVER REPORTED PRESENCE ISRAELIS IN ETHIOPIA. CONSELOR CALLED ON CHARGE MORNING JAN 27 TO INQUIRE WHETHER WE HAD ANY FURTHER NEWS. CHARGE RESPONDED THAT HARDEST NEWS WE HAD CAME FROM COUNSELOR'S OWN AMB (REFTEL). WE STILL HAD NO INDEPENDENT CONFIRMATION.

2. COUNSELOR SAID EGYPTIANS HERE ARE TRYING FIGURE OUT WHY ETHIOPIANS HAVE ASKED FOR ISRAELI MILITARY HELP KNOWING THEY WOULD RISK ADVSERSE ARAB REACTION. THEREFORE THEN CAN ONLY SURMISE THAT IT MUST HAVE TO DO WITH AN ETHIOPIAN PERCEPTION THAT SECURITY SITUATION THROUGHOUT COUNTRY IS WORSENING. INTER ALIA, CONSELOR CITED WIDESPREAD ESTIMATE IN ADDIS DIP CORPS THAT ERITREAN SITUATION HAS ESCALATED RECENTLY. CHARGE TOLD HIM IT TRUE THAT THERE HAVE BEEN SOME RECENT SABOTAGE ATTEMPTS BUT THAT WE DO NOT YET HAVE IMPRESSION THAT GENERAL TEMPO OF EVENTS IN ERITREA HAS INCREASED NOTICEABLY.

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3. COUNSELOR THEN SAID THAT PRESENCE OF ISRAELIS LIKELY

PROVE MOST EMBARRASSING TO EGYPT . HE THOUGHT IT UNLIKELY THAT PRESENCE COULD BE KEPT SECRET LONG AND THAT AS IT BECAME KNOWN, CERTAIN ARAB STATES WOULD SURELY POINT FINGER AT EGYPT SAYING THAT EGYPT HAD PURSUED A MODERATE COURSE VIS-A-VIS ETHIOPIA AND ETHIOPIAN HAD NOW RESPONDED BY REINTRODUCING ISRAELIS INTO THE COUNTRY.

4. ASKED WHETHER HIS FOREIGN MINISTRY HAD YET REACTED TO EMBASSY REPORTING FROM HERE, COUNSELOR SAID THERE HADN'T YET BEEN TIME.

5. COMMENT: COUNSELOR DID NOT REPEAT HIS AMB'S INQUIRY ABOUT WHETHER WE HAD FORKNOWLEDGE THAT ISRAELIS WERE COMING. HOPEFULLY POL COUNS DENIAL YESTERDAY HAS ENDED MATTER.
TIENKEN

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